



News From Your Montgomery County Council

Dear Neighbor:

Montgomery County is a very special place. It's a good place to work, raise a family, and run a business. We all want to keep it that way – and make what's good even better.

That's the job you elect us to do.

Your Montgomery County Council decides how tax dollars get spent.

We are responsible for land use and planning decisions - balancing our need to create jobs and housing with our commitment to preserve open spaces and our quality of life.

And we are responsible for oversight of County government programs and contracts – to make sure we get the most "bang for the buck" and that the job gets done right – the first time.

This newsletter describes the work we've done on the fiscal year 2001 operating budget – for the year beginning July 1, 2000 – and on the six-year capital improvements program – the schools, roads, and other facilities we are planning to build.

Our operating budget and our capital program reflect our priorities as a community. This budget gets things done for Montgomery County. This budget puts children first, while enhancing mass transit, improving roads, and preserving open spaces for future generations.

We are giving our school system, our parents, and our teachers the tools they need to keep our education system world-class. This Council put back into the County Executive's proposed budget nearly \$12 million for math, reading, all-day Kindergarten, and other initiatives. The school system will be able to hire 1,400 new teachers and double our spending on teacher development. We are funding the construction of 11 new elementary gyms and four new recreation centers over the next six years. And we are being fiscally prudent by setting aside \$25 million for needed school construction not yet in the County's plan.

We are building a new Rockville library three years sooner than originally planned and accelerating the timetable for a new Germantown library.

We are investing in roads and transit so we can all get where we are going more easily – and have more time to spend with our families. That means nearly \$6 million in capital monies for the Montrose Parkway, millions more to improve Trivilah Road and construct Woodfield Road Extended in Damascus, and do intersection improvements on Old Georgetown Road and Rockville Pike.

And we just broke ground on Norbeck Road Extended, the missing link to connect Routes 28 and 198, which will help ease east-west congestion.

We significantly cut the cost of "Ride-On" bus passes by 44 percent to encourage transit use and help ease traffic congestion.

Take a look at our County-wide map of transportation improvements in this newsletter.

We approved \$33 million over six years for the "Legacy Open Space" program, an ambitious new proposal to preserve for future generations many of our green spaces and other sites of environmental, agricultural, or historical significance. And there's \$52 million in parks development over six years for more parks, trails and ballfields.

We are giving our public safety workers the tools they need to protect themselves, our families and our homes—with two new fire stations in Germantown, a new Public Safety Radio System, nearly 150 new public safety officers, new resources to deal with juveniles in trouble, and more effective assistance for victims of domestic violence.

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to serve you and your family – and to make a difference for the future.



"This budget gets things done for Montgomery County."

Michael Subin

Giving Kids and Teachers the Tools They Need

Council keeps on putting "Children First" . . .

There's a really good reason why we spend more than half our budget on education. Our children are our future. We need to give them the opportunity to go as far as their energies and talents can take them.

That's why this Council has invested to make sure our schools have the resources to do the job right.

Highlights include:

- **More Teachers.** Over 1,400 new teachers will be hired, many to support reductions in class size initiated by the Council.
- **Smaller Class Size.** Continuation of previous Council initiatives to reduce class size for reading classes in the early grades to a maximum of 15 students and in ninth grade algebra classes to 20 students. Additional funding to reduce over-sized high school classes, to make major class size reductions in grades one and two in high-need schools, and to expand all-day kindergarten.
- **More Teacher Training.** Spending doubled for teacher development, designed to strengthen reading, math, and a host of other system initiatives. Each of 186 schools will have a staff development teacher to work with teachers on professional enrichment. The system will hire 36 permanent substitutes to spell regular teachers as they improve their skills.
- **Stronger Math Programs.** \$1.2 million for strengthening mathematics in elementary, middle, and high schools, with increased funding for algebra programs and summer programs to bolster students lagging in algebra.
- **Stronger Reading Programs.** \$2.6 million to provide elementary schools with a full-time reading teacher, support innovative projects by community groups to improve literacy, focus

on reading for children needing help in grades 1-3, intervention with students failing reading in grades 3 and 6, and increase training for third-grade teachers involved in the system's "Reading Initiative."

- **Helping Parents.** \$380,000 to continue Parent Resource Centers at five schools.
- **Construction of 11 Elementary School Gymnasiums.** The County Executive's original proposal included none.
- **\$25 million for Future Schools.** Set aside by the Council in the capital program for additional school construction needs to increase capacity.
- **Relief for Overcrowding.** \$20 million to alleviate overcrowded school conditions in the Up County in the Damascus and Watkins Mill clusters. Feasibility planning funds for a new middle school in the Quince Orchard cluster to relieve overcrowding at Kingsview Middle School. Planning funds for additions at three schools, new or expanded additions at six schools, and additions at 11 schools slated for modernization.
- **Relief for Overcrowding ... At Less Cost.** By reopening Northwood High School to relieve overcrowding in the Blair cluster, the Council will spend about \$5 million rather than a projected \$54 million to further enlarge Blair and Einstein high schools.
- **Support for Higher Education.** \$70 million for the expansion of Montgomery College's Takoma Park campus and nearly \$24 million for renovation of the Science East and West buildings and the Student Center on the Rockville campus. \$870,000 in funding restored by the Council for technology projects for instructional programs at Montgomery College and another \$437,500 restored for technology – related projects at the Takoma Park campus.



"Four more community recreation centers will be under construction in the next six years – bringing fun for kids of all ages."

~ Councilmember
Steve Silverman



"This budget represents a down payment on a better education system for all: more programs for young children and all-day kindergarten, teacher training, math and reading initiatives, and smaller classes."

~ Councilmember
Blair G. Ewing

Less Time on the Road

Council focuses on transit, roads, to make things better now . . .

We all want to spend less time on the road and more time with our loved ones. We want a balanced approach to traffic congestion that is cost-effective and can make a difference now – not ten or twenty years down the road.

That's why the Council supports the "Network of Improvements" that combines major road and intersection improvements with enhanced mass transit options. The Council opposes the billion-dollar-plus InterCounty Connector superhighway, which even its supporters say will not significantly relieve congestion on I-270, I-95, or the Beltway.

The Council boosted spending on a balanced program of road and transit improvements to improve safety, help alleviate traffic congestion, and increase transportation options for County residents. We also kicked off a Transportation Policy Report that will chart a course for future transportation and land use plans.

Highlights include:

- Montrose Parkway. Nearly \$6 million in capital monies for planning, design, and land acquisition for the Montrose Parkway, designed to relieve traffic congestion between I-270 and Rockville Pike.
- Big Decrease in Cost of "Ride-On" Passes. A 44 percent decrease (from \$18 to \$10) in the cost of two-week passes and 20-ride passes fares for Ride-On bus service, which carries 60 percent of County bus riders. The Ride-On fare cut for passes is projected to go into effect in September. The Council will work with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority for similar reductions for Metrobuses operating in Montgomery County.

When the Council last year decreased the price of the "Cruiser Pass," a monthly pass available to riders under 18 years old, from \$20 to \$10, sales of the passes increased by 118 percent. This actually increased total revenue collected by the County from the passes - even with cutting the fare in half.

- Travilah Road. \$7 million to widen Travilah Road between Darnestown Road and Duffief Mill Road in North Potomac and add a hiker-biker trail along the north side of the road.
- Woodfield Road. \$8.2 million to construct Woodfield Road Extended in Damascus.
- Replacement of Three Deteriorating Bridges. On Goshen Road near Montgomery Village, on Clarksburg Road near Damascus, and on Mouth of Monocacy Road near Dickerson.
- Forest Glen Pedestrian Bridges. Design and construction of pedestrian bridges over three Capital Beltway interchange ramps and a hiker/biker trail along Georgia Avenue through its intersection with the Capital Beltway to allow Montgomery Hills residents access to the Forest Glen Metro.
- Hurley & Goshen. Acceleration by one year for planning to extend Father Hurley Boulevard and to widen Goshen Road.
- Intersection Improvements. For Old Georgetown Road (\$2.6 million) and Jones Bridge Road at Rockville Pike (\$1.1 million).
- Parking Garages at Metro Stations. Construction of new parking garages at the Shady Grove and Grosvenor Metro stations (\$49.2 million).
- New Transit Centers. Development of the Silver Spring Transit Center (\$40 million) and the Takoma-Langley Crossroads Terminal (\$1.3 million).



"This Council seized the moment by speeding up construction of a new Rockville library – and saving \$2 million in the process."

~ Councilmember Phil Andrews



"With funding for Legacy 2000, we've taken a crucial first step to establish a true heritage of treasured green spaces and historic resources for future generations."

~ Councilmember Derick P. Berlage



"With the Up County's new school construction, two new fire stations, and an indoor swim center, we are responding to the needs of families in our County's fastest growing area."

~ Councilmember Nancy Dacek



"It's all about schools and transportation – giving our students and teachers the tools they need and making sure all of us can spend more time with our families and less time on the road."

~ Councilmember Howard Denis

"Our 44 percent cut in Ride-On bus passes will not only increase transit usage but also can reduce traffic congestion and improve our air quality."

~ Councilmember
Isiah Leggett



"We've given the school system the resources to hire 1,400 new teachers and bolster the development and training of those teachers so they can meet the challenges of our world-class schools."

~ Councilmember
Marilyn Praisner



- More Express Bus Service to/from Frederick. The Council added an express bus route from Frederick City to Rock Spring Park (using I-270 HOV lanes), then north to Executive Boulevard via Old Georgetown Road in the morning, with an evening return in the opposite direction at a cost to the County of \$100,000.
- MARC shuttle to Rock Spring Park. The Council approved a measure to connect from MARC commuter rail to Rock Spring Park by diverting the #6 Ride-On from Wheaton and adding another bus to the route to insure that each MARC train is met by a bus, at a cost of \$50,000.
- Transit Incentives for Bethesda, North Bethesda, & Friendship Heights Employees. An enhanced "Super Fare Share" program for Bethesda and North Bethesda for \$175,000 and \$100,000, respectively, will provide County matching monies for businesses that subsidize their employees' transit ridership. A "Super Fare Share" program to encourage transit ridership in businesses in the Friendship Heights area for \$50,000.
- Bethesda Bike & Pedestrian Improvements. \$3.4 million for bike and pedestrian safety in downtown Bethesda.
- And more... \$300,000 more for tree pruning, \$80,000 to update the County's bike route map and signage for bike routes, \$50,000 for safety-related reflectorized pavement markings, and an additional \$100,000 for residential road resurfacing

These new projects are in addition to already approved County and state projects such as the new road construction on Norbeck Road Extended and Germantown Road Extended, road widenings such as Shady Grove Road and Briggs Chaney Road, and numerous intersection and interchange improvements along Route 29.

Public Safety

- Two new fire stations for the growing Germantown area ... \$500,000 to help with renovations to the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department's Fire Station 3 ... \$55.6 million for final design and installation of a new Public Safety Radio System for public safety personnel ... a mounted police patrol and seven new officers dedicated to downtown Silver Spring ... 38 new police officers, 72 additional correctional officers, nine new sheriff's deputies, and 28 new fire and rescue workers ... a system-wide team for emergency victim safety under the Sheriff's Office to anticipate and respond to critical domestic violence situations ... \$250,000 to fund the Betty Ann Krahnke Center against Domestic Violence facility for abused women and children ... \$4.1 million during fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for a Juvenile Assessment Center to insure greater efficiency and effectiveness in the juvenile justice system.

Preserving Open Spaces

- \$33 million over six years for the "Legacy Open Space" project to preserve open spaces, important watersheds, and historic sites in the County so they can be enjoyed by future generations. It will be supplemented by a projected \$9 million in private monies.

The Arts

- \$89 million to build a 2,000-seat performing arts and education center at Strathmore. The Council approved a \$44.5 million cap on County funding for the project, which is shared 50-50 with the state ... funds to construct a new Round House Theatre and renovate the Silver Theatre as part of Silver Spring development ... \$100,000 for Germantown's Black Rock Arts Center.

Housing

- A 170 percent increase – to \$7.2 million – in funding to preserve affordable housing and revitalize older communities in the County by helping community groups, renters, and property owners to improve properties and their surrounding neighborhoods.

Recreation

- \$52 million for park development, including more and better trails and ballfields...four new community recreational centers in Mid-County, North Bethesda, White Oak/Kemp Mill, and North Potomac...a new Germantown Indoor Swim Center...\$1.3 million to rehabilitate the Georgetown Branch trestle over Rock Creek for hikers and bikers.

Health and Human Services

- Expansion of the innovative Linkages to Learning program to nine more sites, bringing one-stop social services to at-risk kids.
- \$669,000 to address mental health needs involving the criminal justice and corrections systems.
- \$526,000 as a County-operated "safety net" to assure mental health services for County children.
- Expansion of the Montgomery Babies initiative to all County birthing hospitals to offer all new mothers and their infants a healthy start.
- Extension of "Rewarding Work" programs for the working poor, including child care, housing, job skills, and health care assistance...cutting the County waiting list in half for home health care and adult foster care...funding for health initiatives in the African American, Latino, and Korean communities...health care, vision and meal programs to serve the homeless and low-income residents...increased resources for programs serving persons with developmental disabilities...transportation services and computer training for seniors...support for the Teen Tobacco Initiative, a student-run anti-tobacco project in the Montgomery public schools.

Libraries

- \$21 million for full County funding of a new Rockville library - three years ahead of schedule. County funding saves about \$2 million in interest costs that would have been incurred under the plan for Rockville city to forward fund the project.
- Acceleration of planning and design by three years on a new Germantown library...renovations for Long Branch and Bethesda libraries...feasibility and site selection for a new Silver Spring library...\$50,000 more to add Sunday telephone reference service.

Saving money and holding the line on fees

- \$1.6 million increase in the County's "Working Families Income Supplement," which provides funds to match the state earned income tax credit for the working poor.
- An operating budget for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission for the coming year with no rate increase for the third straight year -- and projections of zero water and sewer rate increases over the next four years...projected 21 percent decrease in the WSSC work force over the next five years.
- The Council prohibited the charging of a fee to homeowners who pay their property taxes semiannually.
- The Council approved two holidays for health insurance premiums that will save County taxpayers \$3.2 million in fiscal year 2001 and individual County employees up to \$126. Retired employees will also see one monthly premium savings.

Check out your County Council on the Web . . . and on TV

For information on the Montgomery County Council and the issues that affect you and your family, check out the Council on the Web at ["www.co.mo.md.us/council"](http://www.co.mo.md.us/council).

On County Cable Channel 55 (for cable-ready, Channels 5 or 6) you'll find full broadcasts of every County Council session, plus many public hearings, neighborhood Town Hall meetings, and other programs.

Check out the County Cable Montgomery broadcast schedule on the Council website or consult the inside back page of your Washington Post weekly TV magazine.



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Inside:

A Budget that puts kids first . . .

Plus a comprehensive
CENTERFOLD map of transportation
improvements in the works!

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